



PULMONARY HYPERTENSION
ASSOCIATION OF CANADA
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L'ASSOCIATION D'HYPERTENSION
PULMONAIRE DU CANADA

Lung Disease Patient Raises Awareness of Unique Vulnerability During COVID-19

Calgary, Alberta (May 5, 2020)—May 5th is World Pulmonary Hypertension Day and takes place as social distancing measures have been in place for nearly two months. This year, pulmonary hypertension patient Kathryn Downey asks people to continue to make efforts to protect vulnerable people like her and help reduce the spread of the coronavirus.

Kathryn Downey has a rare and potentially fatal lung disease called pulmonary hypertension (PH). COVID-19 can worsen the symptoms of a chronic lung disease like PH and lead to more severe illness. Kathryn's life has become even more challenging while she works to protect herself from the coronavirus.

“Since I was diagnosed on March 13, I feel like I was never able to ask all my questions about PH to understand what it is exactly. How do I cope with this new way of life plus the eminent danger of getting sick from COVID-19?”

World PH Day is the opportunity to make people realize that we can't give up on social distancing measures now, since vulnerable people—like PH patients—remain at risk of severe illness. To raise awareness, monuments across the country will be illuminated in purple on May 5th, including the Edmonton High Level Bridge. The Canadian PH community will also participate in PHA Canada's annual *#PaintCanadaPurple* campaign on social media.

World Pulmonary Hypertension Day is an annual global event to raise awareness of pulmonary hypertension (PH), a severe condition affecting the lungs and heart. PH affects more than 25 million people worldwide, including up to 10,000 Canadians. Over 80 international PH patient associations participate in World PH Day by organizing national awareness campaigns: www.worldphday.org.

Background

About Pulmonary Hypertension

Pulmonary hypertension (PH) is a rare and very complex lung disease, which is progressive and potentially fatal. PH is defined by high blood pressure in the lungs, which leads to enlargement and weakness of the right-side of the heart—a serious type of heart failure. PH can strike people of all backgrounds, ages, and genders. While there is currently no cure for PH, thanks to available treatments, many patients are living longer, healthier lives.

About the Pulmonary Hypertension Association of Canada (PHA Canada)

PHA Canada is a federally registered charity whose mission is to empower the Canadian pulmonary hypertension community through support, education, advocacy, awareness, and

research. PHA Canada has been working to better the lives of Canadians affected by pulmonary hypertension since 2008.

For more information, please visit: www.phacanada.ca/worldphday

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